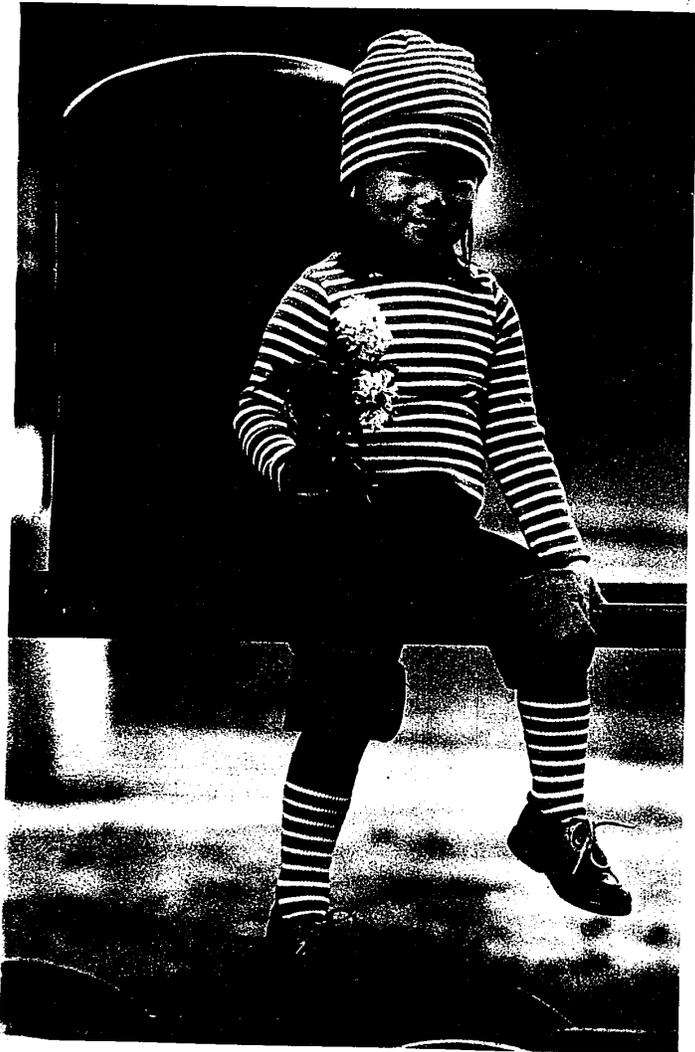


As classes resume this autumn, childrens' fashions take high road



Little girls like 3-year-old Megan Letscher will appear at nursery school in straight "Levi's" jeans neatly rolled up to reveal striped stockings which match her aborba sweater and cap. Her outfit comes from the Rainbow Lollipop shop in Birmingham.

Going back to basics makes academic sense, but children's back to school wear this year will take a higher road with the accent on fashion.

Highest grades of all will go to those with the knack of adding up the pieces and coming out with the "it" look. That won't narrow the possibilities at all because the combinations add up and multiply to endless variety.

Children's clothes will reflect the latest adult looks, with stress on wearability, comfort and flair. Current looks for millady are rapidly translated, for girls and boys fashions emulate what big brother and dad are wearing, right now.

Joanie Abraham, fashion coordinator of the Gun Drop Tree, a children's apparel chain based in Detroit, said parents' attention is focusing more and more on practical wardrobes.

"Instead of buying piece-by-piece as the children's needs are upon them, a well thought-out, coordinated wardrobe approach allows purchases for the least amount of dollars," she said.

Parents planning their children's fall clothes should look for clothing the kids can identify with and also that they can care for easily.

TOPPING shopping lists should be vests. They come loose, short and long, button-down and with neckties in the Annie Hall tradition. Vests will be popular for both boys and girls and come in fleeces, corduroys, knits and denims, all made to team up with plaid shirts, turtlenecks and blue jeans.

Jeans will still make it as the unchallenged leader of the school set and will appear the first day of school and have a perfect attendance record until summer recess. Denim and corduroy are the favorite fabrics and slim is the line.

Blazers will vie with big tops and blouses in the formation of outer layers for many casual put-togethers. For girls, they'll top dresses this year, a big trend, as can be seen all over area stores.

Dresses that look like a grandfather shirt, prairie dresses, and two-piece dresses are some choices, as are the return of the schoolgirl jumper and the schoolgirl apron.

In fabrics, any combination goes, making the clothes all the more eye-catching. New combos include intermingled flannels, corduroys, tweeds and prints.

And if you color it deep in vegetable colors, woody colors and earthy tones and tans, you'll be "with it."

Students who heed the admonition to "go west" will be in the height of fashion. The girls will also borrow from the boys. Vests, bowties, belts and sweaters will trim the blazers and pants in their wardrobes.

JUST LIKE ice cream cones, sweaters will come in many flavors. Cardigans, V-necks, crew-neck pullovers and the hooded models are all favorites this fall. They'll range from flat knits to brushed yarns, shelland looks and the burly, bulky knits.

Velours will be a soft and comfortable way to go for both boys and girls and come in solids,

stripes and patterns and a rainbow of colors. Some will carry applied tape trims.

Dorothy Kubat at the Rainbow Lollipop in Birmingham said the shop deals largely in natural fabrics because that's what mothers and kids like best.

Fall fashion for the school lunch box bunch will add up to just that—what mothers and kids both like.

—by Shirlee Iden



Cute miss sports the denim look in pants, vest and jacket over a plaid shirt, adding up parts to make a fashion impact. The outfit is from Rainbow Lollipop.

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